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Letter dated 30 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the escalation of the situation in the Donbas region (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 30 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the deteriorating situation in the Donbas region

30 January 2017

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry expresses deep concern over the intensification of the Russian terrorist forces in the Donbas region.

For the past two days, the Russian occupation forces have carried out massive attacks across the contact line using all available weapons, including "Grad" multiple-launch rocket systems, artillery of 152 mm and 122 mm, mortars of 120 mm and 82 mm and tanks, all prohibited by the Minsk arrangements, as well as small arms. Russian weapons have killed 8 Ukrainian soldiers and left 26 wounded.

Civilians suffer because of the shelling of residential areas; two civilians have been wounded. The cities of Yasynuvata and Avdiivka were fully cut off of electricity by the shelling. More than 400,000 peaceful civilians in the region have no access to water, electricity and heating. Given the harsh weather conditions and the continuing shelling by the militants, the humanitarian situation in the area continues to deteriorate.

Such actions of the Kremlin may qualify as a war crime, a gross violation of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and an unlawful, wanton and extensive destruction of property not justified by military necessity.

Obviously, the current escalation in the Donbas region is a clear indication of Russia's continued blatant disregard of its commitments under the Minsk arrangements, with a view to preventing the stabilization of the situation and achieving any progress in the security and humanitarian spheres.

We demand that the Russian Federation cease hostilities immediately and comply strictly with the ceasefire.

We request that our international partners step up political and diplomatic pressure on the Kremlin to stop the dangerous escalation in the Donbas region and avoid a humanitarian catastrophe there.